

REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021
AT 4:45 p.m., E.S.T.

Board called to order by Chairman Kusnierz.

Roll call was taken. PRESENT – Eric Connolly, Philip C. Barrett, Jonathon Schopf, Preston Allen, Jean Raymond, Michael Smith, Arthur M. Wright, Kevin Tollisen, Darren O’Connor, Benny Zlotnick, Theodore Kusnierz, Willard H. Peck, Sandra Winney, Thomas N. Wood, III, Tara Gaston, Matthew E. Veitch, John Lant - 17. ABSENT Joseph Grasso, Richard Lucia, Daniel Pemrick, Thomas Richardson, Edward D. Kinowski, John Lawler – 6.

On a motion by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Schopf, the special Board meeting was ratified by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Schopf said that the Law & Finance report was issued in a memo dated October 25, 2021. The report stated that no changes were made to the 2022 Tentative budget at the October 19, 2021 meeting. Any questions or recommendations were deferred to the workshop.

Mr. Bulger provided a brief recap of the budget process:

1. Both Law & Finance members and standing Committee Chairs were able to participate in meetings with Department heads and budget liaison team members in August and early September.
2. Proposed personnel actions and cost estimates were included throughout the budget review process and shared with both Law & Finance members and standing Committee Chairs.
3. Tentative budget was publicly released on October 15th and included department requests.
4. All Supervisors had access to the complete personnel actions requests and recommendations prior to the Law & Finance Committee review on October 19th.

Mr. Bulger reported that the Budget liaison team individually and collectively and individually examined line items for each department’s submission which resulted in \$8.7M in cuts from the budget requests. The Tentative budget came in at \$381,543,332 which is an increase of \$9,708,300 or 2.6% over to 2021 amended budget. This includes projected sales tax revenue of \$141M, which is a decrease from the \$145M projection for the current year. The 2022 property tax levy will come in at \$67,087,564, an increase of slightly over \$2M from 2021. The property tax rate, which is already the lowest out of all 62 counties across the State, will again decrease this year, from an average of \$2.29 to \$2.28 per 1,000. The taxable assessed value County wide is currently \$29.3 billion. Mr. Bulger noted that the State Comptroller has given Saratoga County the highest tax base growth factor adjustment out of all counties in 2022, which is based on an analysis of new construction and measurable improvements to current taxable property. The total County debt continues to be one of the lowest in the state on a percentage basis. Currently, the total county bond payable number is \$64,585,000, which represents 3.3% of the borrowing limit of \$1.96B. As part of the 2022 Capital projects \$11.4M is being proposed to borrow over 10 years for a new Capital Facilities Fund. Regarding fund balance, the County started this year at \$25 million, or approximately 6.7% of the 2021 budget. Due to significantly increased revenue from both ARPA funding and sales, tax receipts, and restoration of state and federal grants and reimbursements that had been cut last year due to the pandemic, it is expected to end 2021 with a fund balance that is conservatively estimated at \$55M, or approximately 14% of the 2022 tentative budget. Given the State Comptroller's recommended fund balance of 5% to 15% of total budget, this puts the County in a strong position moving forward to handle any economic downturns or other unexpected expenses that may impact. Mr. Bulger summarized that this budget makes significant new investments in Public Health, Law Enforcement, Open Space and Trails, Nonprofit organizations and County heritage. Mr. Bulger thanked the dedicated members of the budget liaison team, Department heads and Supervisors for all their efforts and commitment to providing a budget that addresses the needs of taxpayers and residents in the coming year.

Mr. Bulger presented an amendment with several line items listed below and gave a brief overview of the amendments. The bulk of the Appropriated Fund Balance reduction of approximately \$11M is reflected in Unclassified Revenues Bond Proceeds. Currently it is listed under Fund Balance, however once the bond proceeds come in, it's realized as revenue. \$120K ARPA FTC water line, the cost of constructing a water line to the Fire Training Facility is a qualifying expense under ARPA funding, expenses are reflected in the Public Works Budget. Board of Supervisors increase includes a 2% COLA for all Supervisors, and increases in the base salaries for the Vice Chair of the Board and Chairman of the Board. Treasurer Department increase to cover a part time position that was originally proposed to be abolished at the end of this year. Sheriff General Salary increase will include removing a proposed Sergeant and creating Senior Investigator, removing two Civil Clerks and one Clerk and creating three Clerk to the Sheriff, moving Undersheriff from Grade 20 Step 11B to Grade 21, Step 9A, Chief Deputy from Grade 18 Step 12 to the equivalent of Grade 19 Step 10, and creating one Outreach and Discharge Planner. Emergency Services reduction will reflect the decrease in maintenance costs due to upgrades with their communications equipment. Planning Department change was due to an inadvertent mistake in the original budget. Mr. Bulger said that total position changes amount to \$167,767 however, due to additional revenue from the property tax levy and savings in Emergency Services, the transfer from Fund Balance will actually reduce by \$113,188.

REVENUE

Account Title	Account Number	Tentative Budget	Proposed Amendment	New Total
Appropriated Fund Balance	A-0599.B	\$21,057,692	(\$11,587,746)	\$ 9,469,946
Unclassified Revenues (Bond Proceeds)	A.90-2770	\$12,290,530	\$ 11,474,558	\$23,885,088
Unclassified Revenues (ARPA-FTC Water Line)	A.90-2770	\$12,290,530	\$ 120,000	\$23,885,088
Real Property Taxes	A.90-1001	\$67,000,000	\$ 87,564	\$67,087,564

EXPENSES

Board of Supervisors - Regular Wages	A.10.000-6000	\$ 472,595	\$ 13,127	\$ 485,722
Treasurer - General Salary Provision	A.16.000-6890	\$ 99,223	\$ 22,134	\$ 121,357
Sheriff - General Salary Provision	A.31.000-6890	\$ 1,630,969	\$ 109,506	\$ 1,740,475
Emergency Services	A.36.362-8293	\$ 251,582	(\$ 190,391)	\$ 61,191
Public Works	A.50.000-7094	\$ 1,395,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 1,495,000
Public Works	A.50.000-7098	\$ 0	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Planning - General Salary Provision	A.80.000-6890	\$ 109,920	\$ 20,000	\$ 129,920

On a motion by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Connolly, the County Administrator's suggested amendments to the 2021 Tentative Budget were approved by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Zlotnick said that in 2020, the County signed an agreement with the Town of Milton to pay the Town \$60,000 a year for the amount of County property that is in the Town. Mr. Zlotnick said that this has never been adjusted or looked at. Mr. Zlotnick calculated that at a 2% cost of living increase, that total would now be just under \$90,000. In the past 20 years the Airport has added three hangars, a flight services office building and electrical building. The County Farm complex has added a new Animal Shelter, two storage buildings, salt shed and addition to the Jail, the new Public Safety Facility and a couple of buildings for fire training. The town has about 718 acres of County property on it, an assessed value of just over \$65 million. Mr. Zlotnick requested that the County increase the payment to the Town to \$100,000 a year.

A motion was made by Mr. Zlotnick, seconded by Mr. Smith, to increase the County's Annual Payment of \$60,000 to the Town of Milton to \$100,000. The motion failed by the following vote.

AYES (74,142): Eric Connolly (9776), Preston Allen (856), Michael Smith (3545), Arthur M. Wright (2048), Benny Zlotnick (18575), Willard H. Peck (5087), Sandra Winney (1995), Thomas N. Wood, III (5674), Tara N. Gaston (13293), Matthew E. Veitch (13293).

NOES (105,120): Philip C. Barrett (18352.5), Jonathon Schopf (18352.5), Jean Raymond (1214), Kevin Tollisen (21535), Darren O'Connor (14765), Theodore Kusnierz (14728), John Lant (16173).

ABSENT (40,345): Joseph Grasso (4133), Richard Lucia (6531), Daniel Pemrick (7775), Thomas Richardson (5196), Edward D. Kinowski (8287), John Lawler (8423).

ABSTAIN (0):

Ms. Gaston said that the County is in good financial shape however a lot of non-profits are not going to make it through 2022.

A motion was made by Ms. Gaston to increase the ARPA non-profit allocation from \$2M to \$5M. The motion was not seconded.

Mr. Peck expressed concern over bonding certain items such as certain equipment and furniture in the Capital Spending Plan. Mr. Peck said that items should never be bonded longer than their life expectancy. Mr. Bulger said that certain pieces of equipment have been placed in the general fund, however some specialized equipment such as the rack truck and bucket truck were reviewed in the Long Term Capital Plan committee and are included in the bond. Mr. Jarosh assured that Bond Counsel reviews every item being bonded to ensure that there is a term of particular series of bond to cover specific items relative to their useful life. Items are classified based on their useful life and the entire capital plan is broken into the classifications, each classification having own series.

Ms. Gaston questioned the Public Health Department budget, specifically certain budget lines that appear to have been zeroed out. Ms. Hodgson said that the Public Health Department budget is being reorganized. Dr. Kuhles said that the administrative changes reflect the structure of a full service Health Department. The budget codes will align with the structure that is used for State aid reimbursement to simplify the administrative process as the Department grows and to ensure all eligible State aid reimbursements are captured.

Mr. Peck said that the budget passed for last year was \$343M and for people to be aware that this proposed budget is a \$38M increase. Mr. Kusnierz said that the budget also includes mandates on the County, particularly Law Enforcement, which has contributed to some of the increase.

Mr. Kusnierz said that the public hearing for the budget will be on November 30th at 4:45pm and the adoption will be at the special Board meeting scheduled for December 8th at 4:45pm.

On a motion by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Wright, the meeting was adjourned by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Connolly
Clerk of the Board